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UNCLAS COLOMBO 000613

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, IO/UNP, IO/SHA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL SOCI PHUM CE UN

SUBJECT: Action Request: Sri Lankan nominee for UN special rapporteur position re judicial independence

Ref: Colombo-SA/INS 04/09/03 fax

¶1. (U) This message is Sensitive but Unclassified -- Please handle accordingly.

¶2. (U) This message contains an Action Request -- Please See Para 5.

¶3. (SBU) On April 9, the Ambassador was approached by Desmond Fernando, a well known local lawyer, seeking support for his nomination as UN Special Rapporteur for Independence of Judges and Lawyers. Mission thinks very highly of Fernando and believes he would be an excellent choice for the position. In addition to having vast experience in the legal profession and on human rights issues, including working as an advocate for judicial reforms in Sri Lanka, Fernando is also favorably inclined to the U.S. and is a very close friend of Prime Minister Wickremesinghe.

¶4. (U) Some highlights of Fernando's curriculum vitae follow (see Reftel for full C.V.):

-- Member of the London Court of International Arbitration Associates, 1996 to present.

-- Vice President, International Commission of Jurists, 1995-2002.

-- Honorary Life Member, Bar Association of Sri Lanka, and Council of the International Bar Association, 1990 and 2001 respectively.

-- President, International Bar Association, 1996-1998.

-- President, Bar Association of Sri Lanka, 1989-1991.

-- Appointed President's Counsel in Sri Lanka, 1990.

-- International Visitors Program, 1980.

-- Attorney at Law, 1958.

¶5. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST: Mission asks Department to review Fernando's nomination for UN Special Rapporteur for Independence of Judges and Lawyers. As Fernando is an important contact to the Mission, we would appreciate being able to inform him whether or not the USG supports his nomination as soon as possible. END ACTION REQUEST.

¶6. (U) Minimize considered.

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